



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release 29-13

June 6, 2013

My House was not Prepared for a Hurricane

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Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate Stephen Nordan returned to his house in Ocean Springs, Miss., a week after Hurricane Katrina to find his house had filled with 4 ½ feet of water. Before Katrina hit, he evacuated and drove five hours inland.

"The area looked devastated in some areas, but intact in others," said Nordan. "The neighborhood had a zombie-like appearance with some homes missing many roof shingles and wooden fences scattered around. Some home owners had begun to bring the damaged stuff to the curb. As we pulled up to our house it looked to be OK, but after opening my door to the house and garage it was obvious what 4 1/2 feet of water can do to a home."

Hurricane season began June 1 and continues through Nov. 3, which means military personnel and their families should make hurricane preparations sooner rather than later.

"I thought I was prepared for a hurricane, but sometimes Mother Nature comes in and proves you wrong," said Nordan. "Even with preparations there can be damages, but being prepared can make the time without power or the ability to leave your home easier to handle."

Nordan and others in the area had to stay in Navy housing while they worked to make their homes habitable. During that time, the Red Cross provided an important piece of the puzzle—food.

"I was able to eat because the Red Cross handed out lunches and dinners every day at noon and 6 p.m.," said Nordan. "I was very thankful for that because it was one less thing I had to worry about as I got my house back together."

Nordan had to replace sheetrock, electrical outlets, all flooring, insulation, kitchen and bathroom cabinetry and furniture, all appliances, and several windows. He also had to have mold treatment for wood framework. All of his personal items were lost including furniture, clothing and tools. With all of the help he received from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Salvation Army, Red Cross and churches, it still took about \$20,000 to fix, repair or replace everything in Nordan's home that was damaged during Hurricane Katrina.

Even though it took six months to get things back to normal, Nordan is thankful for all the help provided by local, national and military organizations.

“When a hurricane turns your world upside down, it was nice to have so many people offer services, whether it was food, shelter, clothes, supplies or simply a helping hand.” said Nordan. “Now that I know about all these resources, and what it’s like to rebuild after a hurricane, I am better able to prepare my family and home for a hurricane or other serious storm. If I had to name just one thing that people should think about, I’d have to say insurance. If you don’t have the right insurance policy, it can really make rebuilding your home a challenge.”

Hurricane Katrina, a category three storm, made landfall Aug. 29, 2005, and became one of the strongest storms to impact the coast of the United States in the last 100 years. Sustained winds of 125 mph caused widespread devastation along the central Gulf Coast states of the U.S. Cities such as New Orleans, La., Mobile, Ala., and Gulfport, Miss., which bore the brunt of Katrina's wrath.

Hurricanes are rated according to intensity on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, which ranges from 1-5, and is based on the hurricane’s present intensity. It estimates potential property damage and flooding expected along the coast from a hurricane landfall. Wind speed is the determining factor in the scale.

For more hurricane resources, please visit the following Web sites.

- Emergency kits should consist of batteries, two-way radios, manual can openers, first-aid supplies, cell phone chargers, a weather band radio, prescription drugs, water and water storage as well as non-perishable foods. Ideally, the kit should include enough supplies to last three days. To view all of the items to include in basic emergency supply kits, go to <http://www.ready.gov/document/family-supply-list>.
- Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System <https://navyfamily.navy.mil> is used to account for service members and their families, as well as to identify disaster-related needs of Navy families, such as medical, housing, transportation, counseling, etc.
- State of Virginia Emergency Management www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia has many resources for planning and preparing emergency kits, developing evacuation plans and addressing specific special needs for children, the elderly and others.
- Virginia Department of Transportation www.virginiadot.org/travel/hurricane_defauLT.asp Hurricane Evacuation Guide at provides more detailed information for preparing for a hurricane, hurricane evacuation and public shelters in Virginia.
- Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) <http://www.nmcrs.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/#!/NMCRS?fref=ts> will help during times of hurricane evacuation. They assist by providing service members \$300 (single) or \$600 (families) for lodging, transportation and food. Their website will provide basic information, but their Facebook page will provide up to the hour information on the progress.

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